1Thess #18

Roadblocks and satanic attacks should never stop the Believer.

Let us get back into 1Thessalonians chapter one and we will close out this chapter and then open chapter two with an extremely important, but difficult study.

1Thes 1:8 For the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but in every place *the news of* your faith toward God has gone out, so that we have no need to say anything.

The work of the Apostle Paul in Thessalonica was a success, they had become powerful examples of witnessing for Christ in hostile territory.

[1Th 1:9](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/1/9/s_1112009) For they themselves report about us as to the kind of reception we had with you, and how you turned to God from idols to serve a living and true God,

With all the distractions of Greek Philosophy and Greek gods and goddesses, these Bels never wavered in their faith.

They kept evangelizing.

/[1Th 1:10](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/1/10/s_1112010) and to wait for His Son from heaven, whom **He raised from the dead, *that is,* Jesus who rescues us from the wrath to come**.

The work of the humanity of Christ had to be fully accomplished (death, burial, resurrection, ascension and session) before HE could rescue all Bels.\

The Lord gives us an important example that the mission or plan God may lay out in front of us has difficulties and challenges. These difficulties & challenges first must be addressed before we can become victor in any situation.

The life and death of the humanity of Christ gave us an example of picking up our own cross and pressing forward into adversity.

1Thes 2:1 For you yourselves know, brothers *and sisters,* that our reception among you was not in vain,

The Greek word *kenos* (KEN-US), which means not just in vain, related to vanity it really is used for emptiness, or hollow.

The Apostle Paul was saying, what happened during our Bible conference and our teaching time together was not empty…it brought forth incredible fruit.

/[1Th 2:2](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/1th/2/2/s_1113002) but after **we had already suffered and been treated abusively in Philippi**, as you know, we had the boldness in our God to speak to you the gospel of God **amid much opposition**.\

Paul reminds the Thessalonians of his sufferings in the ministry not out of arrogance or seeking sympathy, but a place of truth and facts.

Please jump over to Acts chapter 16 so we can look at some historical facts.

Sometimes as a leader, you simply need to bring the cold, hard facts out and lay them down as a teaching tool – not to draw attention to yourself. Not to seek sympathy or to manipulate anyone, but to wake people up to truth.

Sometimes it is better to use a strong approach of facts and truth. Not try to make adjustments in how something is presented so as not to offend or soften the blow for someone.

Snowflakes and weak-minded Bels can’t handle hard facts and truth. They need a safe space to adjust.

/The rumors and lies about the Apostle Paul were spread to discourage his teaching of true Christianity and elevate false teachers. He was called a liar, a troublemaker, a criminal, a false Apostle, a dictator and a teacher of evil. These were the common rumors he faced in many regions where he travelled or had travelled.\

There were those who even claimed he was a charlatan trying to trick people out of their money.

Those were just the lies and rumors - he also faced physical beatings and incarceration.

That was just the cold hard facts and truth of the matter.

When Apostle Paul arrived in Thessalonica, the wounds on his back from Philippi were still fresh. If Paul was fake or in it for himself, he wasn’t very smart about serving his own self-interest.

Who would suffer through having the authorities drag you into custody constantly, have people regularly verbally and physically attack you for a lie?

 REPEAT

Remember the book of Acts is a bird’s eye view of a 30-year span, of how the apostles spread across the landscape and set up the early church.

The book of Acts actually holds a lot of historical value for humanity even beyond Christianity.

In Acts chapter 16 it covers a time period when the Apostle Paul had taken a young man named Timothy under his wing.

This was when Paul began to prepare Timothy for the ministry.

It is believed that on this trip it was the Apostle Paul, Timothy, Silas and Luke travelling together.

/Act 16:11 So **after setting sail from Troas**, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the following *day* to Neapolis; 12 and **from there to Philippi**, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a *Roman* colony; and we were spending some days in this city.\

Now we can see these are the early formations of Bels and this would open up Christianity to what we now call Europe today.

Act 16:16 And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were thinking that there was a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.

It would be the ladies who came to believe first and began the European ministries.

Act 16:14 A woman named Lydia was listening; *she was* a seller of purple fabrics from the city of Thyatira, *and* a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.

This speaks to the ministry of God the HS, the common grace that leads to efficacious grace for salvation.

God the HS is always busy waking up Unbels and working through positive Bels to keep presenting the gospel everywhere.

[Act 16:15](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/15/s_1034015) Now when she and her household had been baptized, she urged *us,* saying, “If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.” And she prevailed upon us.

Positive Bels took their time, talent and treasure to lift up the teaching of the WORD. To support men of God to the best of their ability in the early church, that is the call for all Bels – grace based ministries are completely dependent upon grace oriented Bels.

/[Act 16:16](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/16/s_1034016) It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave woman who had a **spirit of divination** (*pythōn*) met us, who was bringing great profit to her masters by fortune-telling.

Spirit of the serpent. Apollo had a special snake to guard the oracle of Delphi, one of the great concentrations of demons in the ancient world.\

PIE-THON, is where we get our word python from in the English language.

She kept on having this demonic influence - it is written in a Greek present tense.

A famous priestess under the protection of the god Apollo was named- Pythia, she was able to predict future events.

Her spirit was a demonic spirit that later became known as soothsayers and prophetesses. Women and even sometimes men, who had the demonic spirit to act as fortune tellers.

This is why Bels need to avoid this nonsense today…tarot card readers, astrology, fortune-tellers and mediums, it all comes from a spirit of Pyhtia.

[Act 16:17](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/17/s_1034017) She followed Paul and us and cried out *repeatedly,* saying, “These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you a way of salvation.”

/Demonic forces and fallen angels recognize God, they know Jesus Christ, they have rejected HIS power of salvation and have chosen to remain enemies of GOD. Bels will have many circumstances where evil and forces of evil will be in their periphery. Any Bel who is not at a high level of maturity most quickly separate from this type of environment.\

The Apostle Paul and his men were teachers and leaders who knew how to ignore and operator around this type of evil.

If you are not prepared and mature enough to handle this type of person or circumstance you need to remove yourself from that presence immediately.

[Act 16:18](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/18/s_1034018) Now she continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and he turned and said to the spirit, “I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!” And it came out at that very moment.

/The Apostle Paul knew his mission was to remain in that area evangelizing. Yet he never got distracted by the presence of evil nor did he seek to correct every problem and evil. It wasn’t until the possessed woman interfered with his calling that he dealt with her swiftly in the power of Christ.\

As a growing Bel who is called to move forward in the plan of God habitually. You have to know how and when to deal with problems and evil.

Also, when to simply ignore the distractions and stay focus on your calling.

Bels who have little or no spiritual discernment should never engage any person or environment where evil is present.

The reality even for the SM Bel is that you can not save everyone and be the hero every time you step out in faith.

You have to gain levels of SM to know how and when to engage difficult situations.

/[Act 16:19](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/19/s_1034019) But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was suddenly gone, **they seized Paul and Silas** and dragged them into the marketplace before the authorities,

The truth of our battle is that demonic forces are in play to attack and distract us. That is magnified with cosmic forces so that Bels appear outnumbered.\

We may think we are outnumbered or outgunned at times and that is the plan of Satan.

He wants Bels in confusion, division and despair.

[Act 16:20](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/20/s_1034020) and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, “These men, Jews as they are, are causing our city trouble,

[Act 16:21](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/21/s_1034021) and they are proclaiming customs that are not lawful for us to accept or to practice, *since* we are Romans.”

The Apostle Paul broke no laws, he never said anything against Caesar nor did he force himself upon any strangers trying to evangelize.

Act 16:22 The crowd joined in an attack against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order *them* to be beaten with rods.

The rods used were usually made of birch wood.

They were at least two feet long or longer, it was a brutal thrashing across the whole body, the back, the shoulders and back of the legs.

Sometimes they would also strike the bottoms of the feet to make sure they couldn’t walk for a few days.

/[Act 16:23](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/23/s_1034023) When **they had struck them with many blows**, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely;

The normal procedure was 39 strikes (maximum) given by an expert soldier, usually a legionnaire. \

The rod was better than the cat-o-nine tails that TLJC was whipped with, but none the less it was a brutal beating.

[Act 16:24](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/24/s_1034024) and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.

Meaning Paul and Silas were now chained together by their ankles, mostly likely the chain was embedded into the prison wall as well.

/[Act 16:25](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/25/s_1034025) Now about midnight **Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God,** and the prisoners were listening to them;

This takes supernatural power to rise above the pain and humiliation maintaining a spirit of evangelism and faith.\

These two men probably collapsed for several hours but when they awoke they began singing and giving praise to God.

This is not something a Bel can do in the flesh – this takes a high level of maturity and the power of Christ active and in full control.

God in HIS timing and His power will open up doors and deliver the Bel.

[Act 16:26](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/26/s_1034026) and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone’s chains were unfastened.

/[Act 16:27](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/27/s_1034027) When **the jailer** awoke and saw the prison doors opened, **he drew *his* sword and was about to kill himself,** thinking that the prisoners had escaped.

The Philippians jailor was not a Roman soldier. Even as a local law enforcer, he knew the Roman military had a custom of executing soldiers or anyone who mishandled prisoners.\

[Act 16:28](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/28/s_1034028) But Paul called out with a loud voice, saying, “Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!”

Had the Apostle Paul not been operating from divine viewpoint he may have attempted to make a run for it.

/Even when God is operating openly in favor of the Bel, emotional decisions can cloud the issue. We have to think with BD and we have to have a heart for others even in the circumstances where we are the victim. \

[Act 16:29](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/29/s_1034029) And *the jailer* asked for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear, he fell down before Paul and Silas;

[Act 16:30](https://www.blueletterbible.org/nasb20/act/16/30/s_1034030) and after he brought them out, he said, “Sirs, what must I do to be saved?”

The Apostle Paul and Silas are taken in the night to this local law enforcement officials home. They were given food and medical attention and the gospel of Christ is taught to that whole family.

This one incredible incident turned into a divine appointment of a magnitude of evangelism that reached out into a whole family, and that in turn, touched outward into the local community.

This one night of God working through two beaten down, positive men like Silas and the Apostle Paul not only opened the gospel to other prisoners but a family and a whole community of Unbels were now born again and saved!

 REPEAT

It was, therefore, a divine work of God that, although the Apostle Paul had suffered various attacks, misfortunes and indignities, he appeared unaffected, and did not hesitate to launch a gospel assault on a large and wealthy city named Thessalonica.

/ The Apostle Paul and Silas were still healing from wounds when they entered the Greek city of Thessalonica. They came into a region of Unbels who were completely under the influence of satanic gods and human viewpoint. This was enemy territory as most of the paths they walked were. Adversity, roadblocks and attacks became common ground for the Apostles.\

/The immature Bel looks for the speed bump to claim the adversity is too great. Yet there is no BD backing up the easy pathway coupled with the light and soft cross to carry. The illusion of the name it and claim it, prosperity type teaching is as dangerous for Christianity as the same sex, false doctrines of the rainbow flag churches.\

Weak confused Christians, come in all shapes and sizes. Most of them come from churches who bow to the pop culture movement, who walk under the Cosmic Theology umbrella.